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FBI unsure if Oswald fired slug

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The FBI in Washington said Tuesday it could not determine whether a metal slug examined by its ballistics laboratory a few days ago was the alleged missing bullet from the assassination of President John F. Kennedy here more than 13 years ago.

The slug was given to the FBI Nov. 30 by a Dallas nightwatchman, R. H. "Dick" Lester, 59, of 1440 Hansboro, who said he discovered it with a metal detector about two years ago.

Lester initially revealed his find last month to The Times Herald and was directed to offer the potential evidence either to the House Select Committee on Assassinations, the FBI, or both. He telephoned the Dallas FBI, was interviewed by agents and released the metal slug to the FBI lab.

Lester said he didn't come forth sooner because he knew of no current investigation and thought there was no particular interest in this aspect of the case. He said he heard a Dallas talk show seven weeks ago, in which the assassination was discussed and decided then to tell authorities about his discovery.

In the original government investigation of the Kennedy assassination by the presidential commission headed by former Chief Justice Earl Warren, the official verdict said that Lee Harvey Oswald fired three shots at the presidential motorcade Nov. 22, 1963, hitting the President with two of the shots. The third was never located.

Hundreds of amateur sleuths, writers, lawyers and educators have disagreed with the Warren Commission findings, most of them claiming more than three shots were fired and that some or all of them came from the right front of the motorcade — from the area commonly called the "grassy knoll."

"I don't know if this is the one or not," Lester told The Times Herald when he first reported his find, "but if it is, I kinda feel like somebody should know about it."

Lester said he found the slug about two years ago approximately 60 steps south of the viaduct which goes over Main, Commerce and Elm Streets. It was, he said, buried about four inches beneath the soil beside the railroad tracks near the northern side of the Post Office Distribution Center.

The search, Lester said, began shortly after the assassination, when he would take a few minutes when time permitted, but he found nothing. At the time he was driving a truck for Southwest Wheel & Bearing Co. on a Dallas-Toronto route.

Lester, who calls himself a semi-retired nightwatchman, said he had spent 30 to 40 hours searching.

"I plotted the trajectory with a rifle scope," he said, "then looked in the general area with the metal detector.

"When I finally found it, I didn't figure I had anything. It (the slug) was too big. But after taking it to a gunsmith, I changed my mind. Several gunsmiths have told me it could very well be the size," Lester said.

Donald Moore, assistant director of external affairs of the FBI, said in Washington late Tuesday lab technicians could not tell for sure if the slug was the one in question and suggested the spent slugs in the custody of the

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National Archives be compared to check the metal makeup of the slug.

"It is not possible," Moore's statement said, "to determine whether this bullet has any bearing on President Kennedy's assassination until appropriate microscopic comparisons have been made. Therefore, the FBI has asked the National Archives to make available pertinent bullet specimens for comparison."

An investigator for the House Select Committee on Assassinations (which is just beginning a re-investigation of both the Kennedy and Rev. Martin Luther King assassinations) said Tuesday he tried to reach Lester after reading about the finding of the slug in the Dec. 20 issue of The Times Herald.

Jack Moriarty, the investigator, said the committee was "extremely interested" in interviewing Lester. "I will talk to anybody you think would be interested," Lester said.

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